

# STEP News

## Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc.

Volume 1, Issue 3



### *Continuing to STEP in the Right Direction*



Terry E. Roller, President & CEO

Terry E. Roller officially succeeded Janet Alling as President & CEO of STEP, Inc. as of June 24, 2011.

In his 30 years at STEP, Terry has demonstrated extraordinary leadership skills, a vision of possibilities for the expansion and

development of programs and services, an eagerness and willingness to not only accept challenges, but also seek them out, and a deep commitment to “developing and accessing resources to improve the quality of life for people and the communities in which we live”.

Terry earned a B.S. in Administration of Justice from the Pennsylvania State University. His course work included an internship working with “at risk” youth, which ultimately charted his career path. It was that experience with youth that prompted Terry to respond to an advertisement in the Williamsport Sun-Gazette and accept a position with STEP’s youth program in the summer of 1979.

Upon graduating from Penn State in 1980, Terry returned to STEP as a youth program Case Manager, and was soon promoted to Program Manager. He was instrumental in consolidating the year-round and summer youth programs, and was promoted to Director of Youth Programs. Under Terry’s leadership, partnerships were established with local and statewide entities. These enabled youths to engage in a variety of community service projects that benefitted municipalities, state parks, and the environment.

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*Your Pathway  
to Success*

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STEP, Inc.’s mission is to engage diverse individuals, families, and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success.



## Your Pathway to Success

### *STEP Personnel News*

#### **Rachelle Ricotta - Director of Planning**



STEP welcomes Rachelle Ricotta as our new Director of Planning. She will be responsible for strategic planning, resource development, and community collaboration with the private sector and nonprofit organizations, as well as counties and municipalities. Rachelle was employed as the Community Development/Lead Planner for Lycoming County since 2007, and is a Certified Planner with the American Institution of Certified Planners. She is also a board member of the Central PA Section of the PA Planning Association. Rachelle holds a Master of Science in Planning degree from the University of Toronto and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban and Public Policy from the University of Buffalo.

#### **John Konieczny - Director of Human Resources**

John Konieczny, Assistant Director of STEP since 1991, has been named the Director of Human Resources. While he has performed the essential duties of an HR Director in addition to his duties as Assistant Director, John will now be able to devote full attention to the ever evolving role of a Human Resources Director. With over 20 years at STEP, and prior employment as a CEO for an area nonprofit, John brings a wealth of knowledge and administrative experience to the position. John holds a number of human resources certifications, including a certification in "Employment Law for Central PA Employers,". His academic credentials include a Master of Education degree in Rehab Counseling and a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh.



"These are two very key positions within STEP's administrative team, and represent STEP's commitment to strategically and prudently invest in our short term and long term future. Our employees are STEP's number one resource, and I am confident in John's ability to discharge the duties of Director of Human Resources and tap into the experience, knowledge, and wisdom of our staff. Likewise, I am confident in Rachelle's ability to develop and access resources, in addition to collaborating and strengthening STEP's relationships with the private sector, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, elected officials, and the communities we serve." **Terry E. Roller, President & CEO**



## Your Pathway to Success

### *“STEP Forward Endowment Fund”*

STEP’s Board of Directors has approved the formation of the “STEP Forward Endowment Fund,” a mechanism to address long-term financial sustainability by developing an unrestricted revenue fund. It will serve as a hedge against the elimination and/or reduction in our traditional funding sources.

Since STEP’s inception in 1966, we have relied upon grant money and contributions to fund our operation and provide needed services to our customers. Unfortunately, history has shown that “soft money” can be easily reduced or eliminated. While STEP has always been resourceful and resilient in addressing reductions in funding, the newly formed endowment fund will help combat funding reductions and enable us to be as self-sustaining as possible.

Please contact STEP at 570-326-0587 for information about how you can contribute to the STEP Forward Endowment Fund.

### *Thank you, Bill Nichols...STEP’s Founding Father*



Bill Nichols...STEP’s Founding Father

The first contributor to the STEP Forward Endowment Fund is STEP’s Founding Father, Mr. Bill Nichols. Not only was Bill the first contributor, but he also was instrumental in the formation of the fund, by providing legal counsel and guidance.

Talk about coming full circle! He is the very same Bill Nichols who wrote STEP’s original Articles of Incorporation and formulated the very first Board of Directors way back in 1966. And, he is the same Bill Nichols who secured STEP’s first physical office space, hired STEP’s first Executive Director, and served as STEP’s first President of the Board.

Thank you, Bill, for your generous contribution to the STEP Forward Endowment Fund. And thank you for your years of leadership, guidance, and counsel.



## Housing Options Pathway

### *ARRA Weatherization Grant Awarded*



Cellulose insulation is installed in the attic and sidewalls of a home. Insulating a home is one of the most cost-effective energy saving measures.

Last year STEP received a three-year \$4.3 million dollar grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for their Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). Home renovations through WAP, improve energy efficiency and reduce energy bills.

Two hundred sixty-one homes were weatherized in the grant's first year, earning STEP a \$125,000 performance bonus for completing weatherization of 50% of the eligible homes in that time period. The bonus enabled the weatherization of 19 additional homes.

STEP also received an additional \$500,000 in ARRA funds, as a result of its demonstrated ability and performance. This makes possible weatherization of 77 more homes, bringing the total to more than 360.



## Independent Living Pathway

### *We Celebrate STEP Volunteers*



Head Start Policy Council honored outstanding parent volunteers. Pictured: (top row) Carrie Bennett, Lynn Burkhart, Amy Doud, Jennifer Shearer, Charity DiMassimo, Molly McHenry (bottom row) Katie McCaslin, Supaporn Shetler, Stephanie Garret

STEP Office of Aging honored volunteers on May 19, 2011 with a luncheon at Messiah Senior Center, South Williamsport. Volunteers received awards for donating the most hours during the past year, and for years of service. Thomas Nau received the George C. Meck Volunteer of the year award, for donating the most hours, 1,389 at the Faxon Senior Center.



Shirley Ranck has served for 41 years as a Meals on Wheels volunteer. She is the only active volunteer who has been with the program since its inception.

Outstanding parent volunteers were honored by the STEP Lycoming-Clinton Head Start Policy Council on June 10, 2011, with a picnic and ride on the Hiawatha Paddlewheel Riverboat

in Williamsport. The Policy Council is one of the two Head Start governing bodies that oversee the Head Start program.

Thank You Volunteers



# Your Pathway to Success

(Continued from page 1)

## Continuing to STEP in the Right Direction

A hallmark of Terry’s vision and leadership was his conception and development of STEP’s Wilderness Challenge Program, which offered experiential learning activities for youths, such as rock climbing, rappelling, canoeing, mountain biking, low/high ropes courses, week-long camping excursions into the “wilderness”, and various team-building exercises.

Terry marketed the program throughout the state, and soon youth groups from all over Pennsylvania flocked to STEP to contract for Wilderness Challenge activities. As the program evolved, it caught the attention of PA Secretary of Labor (later, Senator) Harris Wofford. He came to STEP and participated in the Wilderness Challenge activities, helping the program gain greater statewide notoriety.



In this 1989 photo, PA Dept. of Labor Secretary, Harris Wofford (right), receives instruction in rappelling from Terry Roller at Angel Falls. STEP’s Wilderness Challenge program was conceived by Terry, and became renowned statewide.

Terry also successfully marketed the Wilderness Challenge Program to local businesses, corporations, and nonprofit organizations.

As is Terry’s nature to seek new challenges, he became STEP’s Director of Weatherization in 1991. Again, he formed partnerships and expanded the program to include STEP-owned affordable apartment rental units, the provision of accessibility improvements to housing units for physically-challenged family members, and the substantial rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes that positively impacted entire neighborhoods and communities.

The Weatherization Program evolved into the Housing & Building Initiatives program, with Terry assuming the directorship. Concurrently, he accepted the challenge to revive STEP’s Transportation Program - serving as the Acting Director for 2 ½ years. Under his guidance and leadership, ridership rebounded from an all-time low to an all-time high.

In selecting Terry for the position of President & CEO, David B. Stone, Chairman of STEP’s Board of Directors, commented, “Terry brings a wealth of experience in many aspects of STEP, along with evolutionary and bold ideas to move STEP forward in order to better fulfill our mission and goals.”

“I want STEP to be the consummate community team player. I want people to know our impact to the community, and that we effectively utilize tax payers’ dollars to provide services and assist local governments in carrying out public policy. We will continue to forge public/private partnerships and respond to the needs of our customers and partners. We will continue to develop and implement resources that enable people and communities to improve their quality of life. Our product is human and community success. It’s that simple”.

Terry E. Roller, President & CEO

**AmeriCorps**

Now recruiting call 570-326-0587 ask for Daryl Kern





## Workforce Development Pathway

### *STEP's YouthBuild Program Participates In White House Roundtable Discussions*

STEP's YouthBuild program was one of 48 YouthBuild programs in the country selected to participate in White House Roundtable Discussions on May 20, 2011. President Barack Obama initiated nationwide "Roundtable Discussions" to give young people a voice and the opportunity to express their needs and concerns.

Mr. Bill Wehry, Executive Director of Pennsylvania's Farm Service Agency, represented the Obama administration. He was impressed by the professional conduct of our YouthBuild members as they presided over the Roundtable Discussions, held in a conference room in STEP's Head Start building. Mr. Wehry was especially impressed that they had learned and adhered to Robert's Rules of Order.



Mr. Bill Wehry, Executive Director of the PA Farm Service Agency, accepts a complementary YouthBuild sweatshirt from Dalton Sunderland. Mr. Wehry represented the Obama Administration, during the White House Roundtable Discussions.

The major topics of discussion, along with proposed solutions, were forwarded directly to the White House. The need to address high employment was of primary concern to our YouthBuild members.

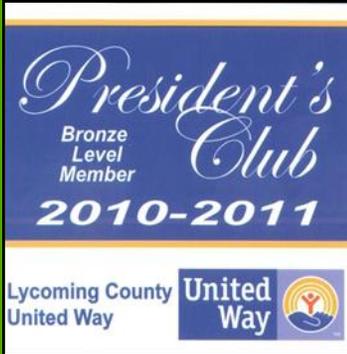
Their proposed solutions included:

- Offering tax incentives to United States businesses to stay in the country and create more jobs.
- Level the playing field with respect to employer regulations and wages in countries where jobs have been outsourced.
- Extend unemployment benefits.



## Community Collaboration Pathway

### *STEP Employees “Pay It Forward”*



STEP received the Lycoming County United Way’s (LCUW) President’s Club Bronze Level Award, representing a 14% increase over the previous year’s employee campaign. Scott Lowery, LCUW Executive Director, wrote: “President John Brunette, campaign chair Jim Campbell, our campaign volunteers and I are most appreciative of the support shown by the STEP, Inc. employees. Workplace support is extremely vital to our success as evidenced by the fact that over 60% of the dollars raised is the result of workplace giving.”



This handmade quilt was donated by a Housing & Building Initiatives customer in appreciation of the accessibility improvements completed by STEP. The quilt raffle, won by Head Start employee, Buffy Neese, generated \$194 towards the ***STEP Forward Endowment Fund.***



PA One Book guest reader, John Konieczny, Human Resources Director at STEP, engages students at the Children’s Learning Center of Penn College, reading *Whose Shoes?* Readers are invited to read to our youngest learners throughout the Commonwealth in a collaborative project, “One Book, One State,” to highlight the importance of early literacy development.

## Clinton County Community Center Progress



The Clinton County Community Center Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held on September 8, 2011 at 10:30 AM.

Come Join Us

STEP's 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting to be held Thursday, October 20, 2011 at Haywoods on the Water. Five award recipients will be honored: Volunteer of the Year, Public Service, Customer Achievement, Outstanding Contribution and Employee of the Year

Terry E. Roller, President & CEO

Traci Lowe, CFO

### STEP, Inc. Board of Directors

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